1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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NOTE VERBALE DATED 24 APRIL 1995 FROM THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE 1995 REVIEW AND EXTENSION CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The delegation of the Russian Federation to the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the Conference, and has the honour to request him to distribute the attached national report on the implementation by the Russian Federation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

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Annex

NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION OF THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report was prepared for the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and contains information on the implementation by the Russian Federation of the various articles of the Treaty. The period covered by the report is essentially the five years that have elapsed since the Fourth Conference to Review the Implementation of the Treaty.

2. As a State party to the Treaty and one of its depositaries, the Russian Federation considers that the Treaty has stood the test of time, and has become one of the strong foundations of the international security system. It has successfully weathered difficult situations and has confirmed its role as a vital instrument for containing the threat of the spread of nuclear weapons. Without the stability afforded by the Treaty in the nuclear sphere, it would be impossible to ensure either global or regional stability. The Treaty has created the conditions for irreversible movement along the road to disarmament, above all nuclear disarmament, and has reduced the risk of nuclear war. Lastly, it has guaranteed the development of broad international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

3. The review of the application of the Treaty at the four conferences of parties that have been held has confirmed the lasting value of this vital international legal instrument. The 25 years that have elapsed since its entry into force have convincingly demonstrated the effectiveness of the balanced structure of obligations it contains. It is a necessity for all countries, large and small, nuclear and non-nuclear.

4. The Treaty must continue to function fully and effectively in the future as well. Accordingly, the main task of this Conference must be to decide on its indefinite and unconditional extension. The Russian Federation is convinced that this approach for the future will accurately reflect the major role the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons plays in today's interdependent world.

5. The following sections contain material describing the role of the Russian Federation in ensuring compliance with all the provisions and articles of the Treaty in the interests of its effective functioning. In view of the significance States parties attach to the discharge of the obligations relating to nuclear disarmament (art. VI and the preamble of the Treaty), the explanations relating to this subject are given at the beginning of the report, before the discussion of the discharge or obligations under the other articles.

II. PROGRESS IN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

6. The Russian Federation is committed to the objective of reducing nuclear forces to a minimum level which would ensure the prevention of large-scale war, the maintenance of strategic stability and, eventually, the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

7. In recent years, considerable progress has been achieved at the talks on the halting of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. The leading role in this process is being played by the Russian Federation and the United States of America; they have concluded the Treaty on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-range and Shorter-range Missiles (the INF Treaty), the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I) and the Treaty on Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II), which are leading to a real reduction in these countries' nuclear forces.

8. In accordance with the 1987 INF Treaty, which deals with ground-based ballistic and cruise missiles with a range of between 500 and 5,500 kilometres, 1,846 missiles were destroyed in the former USSR, and 846 in the United States. Thus, by the end of May 1991 an entire class of nuclear weapons in the arsenals of the two Powers had been eliminated.

9. The START I Treaty entered into force on 5 December 1994. In the context of the reductions provided for in it and in implementation of the unilateral initiatives announced in October 1991 and January 1992, the Russian Federation and the United States have taken, by mutual agreement, a number of major steps as a result of which their nuclear potential has been still further reduced.

10. Thus, the Russian Federation:

- Has eliminated more than 600 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launchers, as well as about 1,500 missiles for these launchers;

- Removed from the fighting strength of the Russian Navy 20 nuclear submarines with SLBM launchers;

- Taken heavy bombers off alert status, and placed their nuclear weapons in military supply depots;

- Destroyed about 50 heavy bombers;

- Conducted measures for the detargeting of strategic missiles under agreements concluded with the United States, the United Kingdom and China;

- Halted production of long-range sea-launched nuclear cruise missiles and of Tu-95 MS heavy bombers.

11. In all, the START I Treaty will result in approximately a 40 per cent reduction in the nuclear weapons of the Russian Federation and the United States over a seven-year period.

12. Unilateral disarmament initiatives are also continuing in the field of tactical nuclear weapons. As part of their implementation, the Russian Federation has withdrawn a large of its tactical nuclear weapons to centralized storage facilities and factory-located facilities in order to destroy them. In particular:

- All tactical nuclear weapons have been withdrawn from surface naval vessels, multi-purpose submarines and land-based naval aircraft, and placed in centralized storage facilities. One third of the total number of warheads for the Navy's sea- and air-launched tactical missiles will have been destroyed by the end of this year;

- All the tactical nuclear warheads previously deployed outside the Russian Federation have been returned to its territory, and a start has been made on eliminating them;

- Production of nuclear warheads for land-based tactical missiles, nuclear artillery shells and nuclear mines has been completely discontinued.

13. The START II Treaty was signed on 3 January 1993. It provides for still more significant reductions in the nuclear arsenals of both States. By the year 2000, the deadline for completion of the reductions provided for in the Treaty, the total level of strategic warheads for offensive arms in the possession of each of the parties will not exceed 3,000-3,500, including 1,700-1,750 SLBM warheads. By the same time, neither party will be entitled to possess ICBMs with multiple re-entry vehicles, and all heavy ICBMs will have been destroyed. The total reduction in strategic offensive arms will be approximately two thirds of the 1990 level.

14. However, that is not all. The Russian Federation and the United States have outlined large-scale new measures. At their meeting held in Washington on 27 and 28 September 1994, the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States signed a joint statement on strategic stability and nuclear security, under the terms of which the parties agreed to make efforts for the early implementation of the bilateral agreements on strategic arms reduction.

15. The Presidents instructed their experts to intensify discussion inter alia of the possibility, after the early ratification of START II, of further reductions of, and limitations on, remaining nuclear forces.

16. The Russian Federation took this step in the belief that, with deep cuts in the Russian and American nuclear arsenals taking place, there was now a need for other nuclear States to participate in the process of nuclear arms reduction and limitation.

17. Accordingly, at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly the President of the Russian Federation, in his statement on 26 September 1994,

proposed that a treaty on nuclear security and strategic stability should be elaborated by the five nuclear-weapon States, providing for:

- Cessation of the production of fissionable materials for military purposes;

- Prohibition of the recycling for weapons purposes of the nuclear materials released as a result of disarmament;

- Further elimination of nuclear weapons;

- Reduction of strategic means of delivery.

18. Naturally, the new Russian initiative takes into account the fact that the arsenals of the five nuclear Powers currently differ in size. Accordingly, the proposed measures will be implemented in stages, taking into account the specifics of their nuclear potential.

19. The Russian Federation also advocates the drafting at the Conference on Disarmament of a multilateral convention on the non-discriminatory and verifiable prohibition of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

20. Not only all the nuclear Powers, but also countries potentially capable of producing nuclear explosive devices or possessing the relevant facilities, primarily for the enrichment of uranium and the processing of spent fuel, should become parties to such a convention.

21. The future agreement should create a barrier to the further production of high-enriched uranium and plutonium for nuclear weapons and should make provision for appropriate monitoring, for which purpose it is proposed that the nuclear materials and facilities of countries acceding to the convention should be placed under IAEA safeguards.

22. Progress has been made in the practical preparation for the start of negotiations on the subject in Geneva, in that their mandate has been agreed upon.

23. The Russian Federation, for its part, has halted production of weapons-grade uranium. A national programme for the halting of the production of weapons-grade plutonium is under way. Of the 13 reactors designed to process weapons-grade plutonium, six have been completely shut down. It is planned to discontinue operation of the remaining three by the year 2000, as replacement capacity becomes available for the generation of heat and electricity.

24. As is especially emphasized in the preamble to the non-proliferation Treaty, one of the most important steps towards complete nuclear disarmament is the discontinuance of nuclear-weapons tests for all time. A complete test ban will still further strengthen the regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

25. Through its active participation in the multilateral negotiations within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the Russian Federation is working for the earliest possible completion of the drafting of a non-discriminatory comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty subject to effective international verification. Speaking at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the President of the Russian Federation advocated the signing of the treaty in 1995.

26. The success of the negotiations does not depend only on the Russian Federation, and a process of finding solutions that are mutually acceptable both among the nuclear Powers and by the other participants in the negotiations is under way. A positive outcome of the work in 1994 was the preparation of a composite text of the draft of the future treaty. Its structure and a number of provisions have been agreed upon. Given the political will, there is a very real prospect of the negotiations being completed and the treaty submitted for signature in the very near future.

27. A favourable atmosphere for the negotiations on the complete banning of nuclear-weapon tests is created by the moratoriums on the conduct of such tests.

28. The Soviet Union, and subsequently the Russian Federation, have not conducted nuclear tests since 24 October 1990. This unilateral moratorium has been extended more than once. The Russian Federation will continue to maintain the moratorium proclaimed by presidential decree on 5 July 1993 for as long as the other nuclear Powers which have announced moratoriums observe theirs.

29. The provision of clearer security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons is an important factor in facilitating the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and in international stability.

30. The new Security Council resolution on security assurances adopted in April 1995 builds on the provisions of Security Council resolution 255 (1968). It guarantees the provision of the relevant assistance by the Security Council in the event that a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the NPT is subjected to nuclear aggression or the threat of aggression.

31. The resolution takes note of the statements by the nuclear Powers on "negative assurances".

32. The Russian Federation, for its part, will not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, except in the case of an invasion of or any other attack on the Russian Federation, its territory, its armed forces or other troops, its allies or on a State towards which it has a security commitment, carried out or sustained by such a non-nuclear-weapon State in association or alliance with a nuclear-weapon State.

33. The Russian Federation is continuing in the context of the various multilateral negotiations, particularly those at the Conference on Disarmament, to take active steps for the prohibition of other types of weapons of mass destruction and for the limitation of conventional weapons. The steps in this

direction are in the spirit of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and are conducive to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime.

34. The Russian Federation signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction in January 1993. It is participating in the persistent search for mutually acceptable solutions relating to certain of the procedures for implementation of the Convention which are being developed by a special mechanism, the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons at The Hague.

35. The Russian Federation is participating in the resolution of the remaining issues and working for the earliest possible entry into force of the chemical weapons convention, and is preparing the national legislative basis for the discharge of its obligations under the Convention.

36. The Russian Federation supports the efforts to strengthen the regime of the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. The Special Conference of States parties to the Convention held at the end of September 1994 reviewed ways of strengthening the verification regime and took a decision on the starting in 1995 of negotiations on the development of a verification mechanism for the convention.

37. Serious steps have been taken in recent years to limit conventional weapons and armed forces, with the adoption of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (1990), the Concluding Act of the Negotiations on Personnel Strength of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (1992), the Vienna Document on confidence-building measures and security (1992-1994) and other agreements.

38. The non-proliferation Treaty is the sole multilateral agreement that legally binds the nuclear Powers to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective nuclear-disarmament measures. The results achieved here demonstrate that the nuclear arms race has been halted and reversed and that the Treaty is providing an incentive for further steps in this direction, leading to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Articles I and II

39. Like the USSR in the past, the Russian Federation, as a nuclear-weapon State, has strictly observed its obligations under article 1 of the Treaty not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly; in addition, the Russian Federation has not in any way assisted, encouraged, or induced any non-nuclear-weapon State to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or control over such weapons or explosive devices.

40. The Russian Federation has proceeded from the premise that the strict observance of article II of the Treaty is one of the principal ways to prevent the emergence of new nuclear-weapon States. In its relations with other

countries, the Russian Federation has unswervingly observed its obligations under article II of the Treaty.

41. In the complex conditions in which new independent States were formed in the territory of the former USSR, collective decisions were taken to prevent the proliferation of Soviet nuclear weapons. Owing to the efforts of the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan and other countries, an international legal mechanism was set up providing not only for the removal of former Soviet nuclear weapons to the Russian Federation, but also for the elimination of most of them. Under the 1992 Lisbon Protocol, the Russian Federation remains the sole nuclear State in the territory of the former Soviet Union, and the three above-mentioned countries would accede to the non-proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States (these agreements have already been carried out).

42. NPT has become a strong barrier against the spread of nuclear weapons and a standard of civilized behaviour on the part of States at the current time with the rapid structural changes occurring in the world.

Article III

43. In accordance with its obligations under this article of the Treaty, the Russian Federation has continued to provide nuclear material and equipment to non-nuclear-weapon States for peaceful purposes only if they are subject to IAEA safeguards.

44. Along with the other nuclear-weapon States that are nuclear suppliers, the Russian Federation participates in the work of amending and updating the list of nuclear materials and equipment, whose export, in accordance with article III of the Treaty, requires the application of IAEA safeguards, and has strictly abided by the list in its export policy. The Russian Federation continues to advocate that all countries which are nuclear suppliers should observe the principle of all-inclusive safeguards. At the present time, nuclear exports from the Russian Federation can be provided only to non-nuclear weapon countries all of whose nuclear activities are subject to IAEA control.

45. Since 1992, a new export monitoring system has been in effect in the Russian Federation, whereby the export and import of dual-use items which might be utilized to create nuclear explosive devices are licensed.

46. Considering the Agency's activities one of the key elements in the system of measures for ensuring and strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, the Russian Federation helps in a comprehensive manner to enhance the effectiveness of the safeguards system, including the further elaboration of the concept of special inspections, inter alia, at undeclared facilities. At the same time, the practical activities of IAEA in implementing the safeguards should not hamper scientific and technical development or international cooperation by States in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and should be based on optimum utilization of the Agency's human and material resources.

47. In accordance with the IAEA safeguards agreement with the USSR of 10 June 1985, the Russian Federation has cooperated with the Agency in conducting inspections at its peaceful nuclear installations. In 1991, work was

completed on the construction, under IAEA safeguards, of a BN-600 fast reactor at the Beloyarsk nuclear power station, which is of specific interest for the Agency in view of the possible long-term trend in the development of nuclear energy (because of limited resources, IAEA did not apply safeguards at it). The list of Russian peaceful nuclear installations, from which the Agency can select facilities for inspection, has been expanded.

48. The Russian Federation also assisted the Agency in activities relating to safeguards by providing highly qualified specialists both to participate in inspection activities under Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and to evaluate the state of the former nuclear-weapon programme in South Africa. In addition, Russian experts participated in the work of advisory groups to develop approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of the application of the safeguards and in defining effective ways to improve technical monitoring means in applying the safeguards, as well as in the work of the Standing Advisory Group on Safeguards Implementation (SAGSI).

49. The Russian Federation continued to contribute to the technical development of the safeguards by conducting a considerable amount of work within the framework of the national programme of scientific and technical support for IAEA safeguards aimed at developing methods and procedures as well as technical means to be applied in the safeguards. From 1990 to 1995, approximately 600 million roubles were spent to finance work under the Russian national programme, in which the country's leading scientific research institutes and organizations participated.

50. Russian scientific research institutes are assisting the Agency in analysing samples of spent fuel gathered by IAEA specialists during inspections as well as samples of the environment taken in order to monitor undeclared activities relating to the processing and enrichment of nuclear materials. A small-scale spectrometric telluride cadmium-based detector with high energy resolution, which was widely used in the Agency for monitoring spent fuel, was developed within the framework of the national programme.

51. The annual holding of international training courses for IAEA inspectors in the Russian Federation has become a tradition: both for novice inspectors at the Novovoronezh nuclear power plant as well as for experienced inspectors in the construction of new nuclear installations under IAEA safeguards. In addition, Russian scientific institutions conducted courses for the staff of national systems for accounting for and monitoring nuclear materials.

52. The Russian Federation also participates in the "93 + 2" programme to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the IAEA safeguards system. Research is being conducted into the possibility of using environmental monitoring to detect signs of undeclared activities in the construction and testing of nuclear explosive devices. There are plans to define the indicators for nuclear-weapon activities, develop methods for selecting and analysing samples of the environment and determine the effectiveness of using such methods in international safeguards.

53. The Russian Federation favours greater international cooperation in order to halt the illegal sale of nuclear materials and to exchange information.

Ensuring the non-proliferation, physical protection, security and safe keeping of nuclear materials is an obligation of all sovereign States that have such materials and those States bear the responsibility for the consequences if nuclear materials disappear or are stolen or illegally moved. In addition, it is necessary to help IAEA to utilize its considerable potential in improving physical protection and developing systems for controlling and accounting for nuclear materials. Establishing bilateral cooperation between law enforcement bodies is important. The Russian Federation's most extensive relations in this regard are with Germany, with which it signed a bilateral memorandum on cooperation in preventing the illegal sale of nuclear materials. The Russian Federation cooperates in this area with other countries as well.

54. The IAEA safeguards system, which does not impede peaceful nuclear cooperation, is an effective instrument that strengthens trust in the compliance with the non-proliferation Treaty and the detection of unsanctioned activities. The system is a further factor for strengthening security, first and foremost at the regional level.

Article IV

55. The Russian Federation remains faithful to the principles of equitable international cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and providing assistance to developing countries and regions of the world in satisfying their wishes on the basis of non-discrimination, if they are legitimate and do not run counter to the Treaty. Of course, unlike non-parties to the Treaty, the non-nuclear-weapon States parties are creating the necessary conditions for acquiring equipment, materials and information in the nuclear field.

56. Like the USSR earlier, the Russian Federation is endeavouring, in accordance with the means available to it, to ensure broad access on the part of other countries to the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy at both the bilateral and multilateral levels, inter alia, within the framework of IAEA. Many of these measures were carried out during the past five years.

57. The further development and introduction of nuclear power is one of the most important, long-term areas of cooperation. On the basis of Russian designs, 20 power units of 9,980 Mw total electric power were built and are in operation (in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Finland and Slovakia). An additional 4 power units in Slovakia, 2 in the Czech Republic and 2 in Cuba are in various stages of construction.

58. Two intergovernmental agreements have been signed with the Islamic Republic of Iran on building nuclear power plants in Iranian territory and on cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

59. Russian organizations provided a wide range of services in the construction of nuclear-power and other facilities in foreign countries:

- Surveying to select construction sites;

- Plant design, manufacture and delivery of equipment;

- Delivery of nuclear fuel and so forth.

60. From 1990 to 1994, spent nuclear fuel from nuclear power stations with VVER-440 reactors was shipped from Hungary, Finland, Ukraine and Slovakia to Russia for subsequent processing. In the framework of providing technical assistance to the United Nations and IAEA in implementation of Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 707 (1991) concerning the export of nuclear materials from Iraq, irradiated nuclear fuel from a research reactor in Iraq was shipped to the Russian Federation and processed. It should be pointed out in particular that the Iraqi side took all necessary steps to ensure the completion of the work in its territory.

61. Russian enterprises continued to provide many countries with services in the field of uranium enrichment.

62. In its cooperation with developing countries, the Russian Federation focuses on their vital needs. An example of this is the desalinization of sea water. On the basis of IAEA recommendations in this area, a national programme project to set up nuclear-powered desalinization plants for the cost-effective production of drinking water by the year 2000 and beyond was drawn up. At IAEA conferences held in 1994 in Vienna and Cairo on the desalinization of sea water, the Russian Federation submitted an improved design of a floating plant with a lower real cost on the basis of ship-borne nuclear reactors.

63. The Russian Federation drew up designs for nuclear heat-supply plants for countries with harsh climates.

64. It should also be pointed out that programmes for developing nuclear energy in the Russian Federation and the countries of Eastern Europe were considerably curtailed after the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. This reoriented international cooperation towards research into questions relating to nuclear security, where the Russian Federation cooperates widely with other countries in solving the problems of enhancing the safety of nuclear power.

65. In spite of the Russian Federation's complicated economic situation, the necessary resources were found to make regular voluntary contributions to the Technical Assistance and Cooperation Fund for developing countries that are members of IAEA. The Russian Federation's voluntary contribution for 1994 alone amounted to 3 billion roubles. Through IAEA, it supplies developing countries with electron accelerators, cyclotron systems, neutron generators, neutron radiography units, gamma-therapeutic apparatuses and other equipment, as well as materials: natural and enriched uranium, impoverished uranium, metallic zirconium, isotopes and radioactive compounds.

66. Within the framework of the IAEA technical assistance and cooperation programmes, Russian scientific research institutes and enterprises conduct training activities every year: courses, on-the-job training, probationary training and scientific visits for specialists from developing countries that are IAEA members, in which there are as many as 50 participants. Probationary training was conducted in the following fields:

- Radiological medicine,

- Biophysics and biochemistry,

- Conducting research with the use of cyclotrons,

- Practical work in the use of accelerators and neutron generators,

- Handling of radioactive waste etc.

67. Courses for training specialists from the International Nuclear Information System (INIS) and on the operation of liquid nitrogen production units are also held.

68. The non-proliferation Treaty established a unique structure of constantly expanding international cooperation in the field of the peaceful use of nuclear energy for decades to come. This structure is developing more and more possibilities for the social and economic development of the developing countries. The Russian Federation is prepared to continue to cooperate with these countries taking into account their requirements and specific characteristics.

Article V

69. Since the Fourth Conference, there has been not been evidence of any interest in obtaining benefits from the peaceful nuclear explosions provided for under this article.

Article VII

70. The Russian Federation continues to advocate the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world, considering that this process helps to narrow the geographic sphere of nuclear preparations and thereby strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

71. The Russian Federation views the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as an important factor for strengthening international peace and security, which promotes the development of disarmament processes at the global and regional levels.

72. Nuclear-weapon-free zones constitute good regional supplements to the NPT regime, and in a number of cases (the countries of South America), they create the prerequisites for subsequent accession by States to the Treaty. The Russian Federation has consistently supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Middle East, Africa, South Asia and other regions of the world. It is a party to the corresponding protocols to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty. Of course, Russia's position with regard to the transit of nuclear weapons through the territory of nuclear-weapon-free zones is that the generally recognized norms of international law, particularly the principle of freedom of navigation, must be strictly observed in concluding corresponding treaties. The scope of a treaty may not extend beyond the territory of the States parties,

including airspace and territorial waters, determined in accordance with international law.

Articles VIII, IX and X

73. The Russian Federation has provided all possible assistance for the preparation and holding of the Review Conferences and the implementation of the provisions of their Declarations.

74. Believing that the most important means of strengthening the Treaty is to expand further the number of States parties to it, the Russian Federation, together with the other depositary States has continued its active work to attract new States to the Treaty, particularly in regions of special importance with regard to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Approximately 30 countries, including China and France, have acceded to the Treaty since 1990. The fact that there are more than 170 States parties to the Treaty demonstrates its almost universal character.

75. As a depositary of the Treaty, the Government of the Russian Federation has sent the corresponding notifications promptly to all the parties.

76. With regard to the convening of a conference 25 years after the entry into force of the Treaty as provided for under article X, the Russian Federation believes that decisions that introduce an element of uncertainty with regard to the fate of the Treaty will seriously undermine international trust and commitment to the objectives proclaimed in it, particularly nuclear disarmament. It is the Russian Federation's firm position that the Treaty, as a major international legal document of the nuclear age ensuring an optimum balance in terms of halting the spread of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament and cooperation in the peaceful uses of the atom, must be extended indefinitely and unconditionally. Such a decision by the Conference will lay the foundation for further progress in the twenty-first century towards a non-nuclear world in the future.